Presented to the Revd Mr Ker
by the Author.
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A

DISCOURSE

ON

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM,

PREACHED IN PORT COLBORNE, C. W.,

BY THE

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AUTHOR OF THE "ESSAY ON THE LORD'S DAY," "BIBLICAL CHART," AND "FIRST COURSE IN RHETORIC."

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DISCOURSE.

"*Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations,—baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*"—MAT. 28, 19.

THESE WORDS are frequently termed the apostolic commission, and are intimately connected with the characte of the true Church, in every period of the Christian dispensation. They were uttered by our blessed Lord, a little before his ascension into heaven, and consequently may be considered as his last charge to the Apostles whom he had chosen. You will immediately perceive that the ordinance of Baptism is distinctly referred to, in my text; and that, although, according to our English version, the Apostles were instructed to teach all nations, yet, according to the original, "*Maïheteusate panta ta ethna baptizontes autous :*" they were to make disciples of all nations by baptising them: thus plainly implying, that baptism by water is an initiatory ordinance into the Church of God.

In calling your attention to these words, I propose to notice,

I. The nature and design of christian baptism.

II. The proper subjects of this ordinance.

III. The scriptural mode of administering it.

I. *The Nature and Design of Christian Baptism.*

But before I proceed, it may be necessary for me to mention the different views entertained by professed Chris-

tians upon this subject: and in doing this, I will mention three very important ones, which most imperiously demand our attention. The first is that entertained by the Papist and the semi-Papist; the second is that inculcated by the ultra Protestant; while the third will embrace the faith and belief of the holy Apostles of our Lord, and of the truly Catholic and Apostolic Church to the present day.

The Papist and semi-Papist professes to believe that there is a saving efficacy in the water of Baptism, by which original sin and actual transgression are washed away; and that, consequently, baptism must be regarded as a moral and spiritual regeneration of the party baptized, God being considered as the prime, and the officiating Clergyman the secondary agent in the ceremony. Now that the Holy Bible does speak of Baptism as a regeneration to God, is rendered incontrovertible by a diligent study of its sacred pages; but that this appellation is given to it in consequence of its connection with the thing signified, is made so abundantly manifest, that he that runs may both read and distinctly understand. Does the Papist in astonishment enquire of you, why you dare but believe that the water of Baptism saves the Soul, and washes away sin? just inform him of the case of Simon Magus, as recorded in the eighth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, who having received the ordinance from the very highest authority under Christ, was pronounced by the same authority *"To have neither part nor lot in the matter of true religion," †"To be in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity," and who was divinely instructed that ‡"His heart was not right in the sight of God." Now this information is quite sufficient as an answer to the enquiry; for here the fact is recorded of a man's receiving the holy ordinance of baptism, and yet his heart was not right in the sight of God, he being regarded as in the gall of bitterness and bond

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*Acts 8. 21. †Acts 8. 23. ‡Acts 8. 21.

of iniquity. In addition to this, the fact may not be unworthy your notice, that in the first ages of the Church, very many were Baptized upon a confession of their faith, and who had, before they received this sacrament, tasted the regenerating influence of God's Spirit: Thus St. Peter says in the tenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, * "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptised which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" But if the design of baptism were to wash away sin there was no need of these persons receiving the Holy Ghost until the water was applied in the sacrament. If baptism be the thing signified instead of the sign, it was not only an unnecessary burden, but the very introduction of it was a public insult to the Almighty; for if God †abundantly pardoned the repenting sinner *before baptism*, and if it were the design of God to administer pardon in this ordinance; the one pardon would argue that the other was imperfect; the pardon or regeneration of baptism would demonstrate that the first pardon was not abundant, which you know would be repugnant to every principle of reason and to the sacred truths of revelation. In a word, there is the same superstitious nonsense in the supposition that baptism is the thing signified as well as the sign, that there is in the Popish notion respecting transubstantiation, that the sacramental bread is not the sign, merely, but the thing itself, viz: the body, blood, soul and divinity of Christ; and nothing but infidelity, which is at the root of all, could drive any enlightened man into this error so fatal and ruinous to mankind.

But while the Papists and semi-Papists are bewildered with vain and presumptuous notions of the efficacy of baptism, it is to be lamented that too many professed Protestants run into the opposite extreme; and either from ignorance of the Holy Scripture, or an unenlightened opposition

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* Acts 10. 47. † Isaiah 55 7.

to Rome, they seem to attach little or no importance to the ordinance. They tell us they know of no good to be attached to this sacrament, they however acknowledge it is very well to receive it when it is convenient to do so, and that when they feel like it, they will have their children christened, but after all it is a matter of perfect indifference to them whether or not they shall have their children incorporated into the body of Christ. And even after they have received this holy sacrament they talk as ignorantly about their offspring's not belonging to any church, as if baptism was not the sacred ordinance of initiation, or as if their children had never been brought into the visible church of God. Now need I inform you my brethren that if the former view as entertained by Papists be dishonouring to God, this view is still more so; for it charges our Lord with introducing an ordinance into his Church to which there is neither meaning or importance attached. For if baptism be of no benefit it is not necessary to receive it, and consequently disobedience to Chirst and contempt of his ordinance would be a virtue instead of a reproach to a christian parent. Nevertheless there must be some meaning and importance associated with the following passages, * "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." † "Baptism doth now save us." ‡ "Repent and be baptized every one of you for the remission of sins." ‖ "Except a man be born of *water* and the *spirit* he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." These passages, my brethren, with a multitude of others to the same effect, most clearly show that this sacrament is most reverendly to be received by every sincere christian, and that it may be a channel through which grace may be communicated when received with a devout heart and with unfeigned thanksgiving to Almighty God.

You will now be prepared for the views entertained by

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*Mark 16. 16. †1 Peter 3. 21. ‡Acts 2. 38. ‖John 3. 5.

the inspired Aposties of our Lord and of the whole Catholic and Apostolic Church to the present day. And as the very words of the Church of England embraces the Faith of every branch of the Reformed Church, I feel that I cannot express the views of the inspired writers more forcibly than by adopting the words of this Church as my own. In her catechism she declares it to be "An outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, given unto us, ordained by Christ himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof." And in her thirty-seventh Article of religion she declares "Baptism is not only a sign of profession and mark of difference whereby christian men are discerned from others that be not christened, but it is also a sign of regeneration or the new birth, whereby as by an instrument, they that receive baptism rightly are grafted into the Church, the promises of forgiveness of sins, and of our adoption to be Sons of God by the Holy Ghost are visibly signed and sealed; faith is confirmed, and grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God."

Now as baptism was given unto us by Christ, and as it has for its outward and visible sign the element of *"Water,' and for its inward and spiritual grace †"A death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness," we most justly pronounce it a sacrament of the New Testament, in which is communicated grace to the receiver, according to the divine appointment. It is, in consequence, regarded as the door of entrance into Christ's Church, or, as an ordinance by which its subjects are grafted into his body. Thus, when St. Paul informed the Corinthian Christians that they were ‡"By one Spirit baptized into one body," he instructed them that baptism was the initiatory ordinance into that body; for it is said they were baptized into it, which is equivalent in signification to be *initiated* into it, and that the body into which they

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* Acts 8. 36. † Rom. 6. 3. ‡1 Cor. 12 13. ‖ Eph. 1. 22.

were baptized, was the Church, we learn from his Epistle to the Ephesians, in which he informed them that ‖"God gave Christ to be head over all things to the Church, which is his body." So again in the sixth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans he says: *"Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death." Here the phrase *"baptised into Jesus Christ"* implies that baptism was the visible door into Christ, and hence, was regarded as the ordinance of initiation. In confirmation of this we have the same instruction in his Epistle to the Galatians: †"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." Here is a phrase similar to the other, where baptism is represented as the door into Christ, or in other words, an ordinance by which men became Christians, that is, so far as a public profession of Christianity was concerned: for the very fact that we are told ‡"It is not every one that saith Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom," gives us most distinctly to know, that being Christians merely by baptism, will not save the soul, and that without faith in Christ, our mere profession is but as the sounding brass and tinckling cymbal.

These truths being duly considered, you will be prepared to understand us when we tell you, that baptism regenerates its subjects to God, for it effects a change of state which can scarcely fail to justify our thoughts upon this subject.—By a change of state I mean an introduction into the Church, and this change of state Theologians denominate baptismal regeneration, to distinguish it from the change of heart and affections, which for convenience they term moral or spiritual regeneration. This is the substance, and baptism is the shadow, baptism is the sign, but this is the thing signified.—That Christ our Lord regarded Baptism in this light is evident from his well known words to Nicodemus, ‖"Except

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* Rom. 6. 3. † Gal. 3. 27. ‡ Mat. 7. 21. ‖ John 3. 5.

a man be born of *water* and of the *spirit*, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God:" and though the expression to be born of water, implies a regeneration by water; for without regeneration there can be no birth after the natural one; yet it is evident without the regeneration or birth of the Spirit, the regeneration or birth of water could never effect the salvation of a soul. It is in metaphorical language that baptism is called regeneration, just as the bread was said to be the body of Christ, because it was the sign of it, or as the wine in the cup was called the cup, because the cup contained it, so baptism is called regeneration, because it is the sign of it, and because it represents the operation of God's Spirit upon the heart.

These, my brethren, are the views entertained on baptism by every department of the Protestant Church; for notwithstanding all that has been said to the contrary by a certain Popish party in the Church of England, nevertheless the Canons, Articles, Homilies and Liturgy of that Church most decidedly pronounce such persons as intruders into the body. Instead of her regarding baptism as the thing signified like the Papists, she has ever regarded it as the sign: thus in her Catechism she declares it to be "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace."—Now should an Archbishop, Bishop, Presbyter or Deacon of that Church step forward and tell you the Church of England believes with the Papist, that it is the thing signified instead of the sign, would you believe him, when at the same time from infancy you have been instructed that it was only the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace? I think not. They might as well inform you that there was no difference between the shadow and the substance, or that both were embraced in the shadow, as to tell you that the thing signified was synonymous with the sign. Not only in her Catechism but in her thirty-seventh Article as already referred to, she presents the self-same truth for your consideration. It reads "Baptism is not only the sign

of profession and mark of difference whereby christian men are discerned from others that be not christened, but it is also a sign of regeneration. But Dr. Love Popery and Mr. Jesuit will talk to you of their attachment to *the Church—the Church—the Church*, and at the same time inform you that her teaching is false: for they will tell you in direct opposition to the Article, that instead of baptism's being the sign, it is the thing signified. And so explicit is the Article that it says "they who receive baptism *rightly* are grafted into the Church." This is just what I have already proved, baptism being regarded as the ordinance of initiation: and the word *rightly* in the Article implies, that unless baptism be accompanied by believing, penitent, grateful and obedient hearts, all the waters of Jordon, Damascus or North America, will not, nor cannot wash away the guilty stain of sin from the human heart. But the Church stops not here, but informs us that the promise of forgiveness of sins is in it visibly signed and sealed, faith is confirmed and grace is strengthened by virtue of prayer unto God. Not as the above named gentlemen would inform you, by virtue of the water of baptism, or of the officiating minister, but by virtue of prayer unto God. And that the Church of England never did, and with her present Articles and Liturgy never will, hold baptism as a substitute for moral or spiritual regeneration, is made incontrovertible by almost every prayer in the Liturgy. Thus, in the Collect for Christmas day the congregation is taught to pray "Grant that we being regenerate and made thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit." Now this prayer teaches every son and daughter of the Church not to rest satisfied with the baptismal privileges which may be many, but to seek to be daily renewed, evidently implying that we need another regeneration than that supposed to be received in baptism. In the Collect for the "Circumcision of Christ," we are taught to pray "Grant us the true circumcision of the heart:" a petition which most undoubtedly

teaches us that the application of water in baptism does not baptize or circumcise the heart, and that water baptism, however good in its place, is but the sign of the blessing for which the Church teaches us so fervently to pray.—Talk to a Tractarian from Oxford College about the necessity of praying for the circumcision of the heart, and he would tell you in opposition to the prayers of the Church, that all this was effected in baptism and that you need not trouble yourself about the matter, and yet that Church which he professes to respect, teaches you the true principles of the Protestant Reformation which he so indignantly despises.—In the Collect for the first day of Lent we are taught to pray "Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we may obtain perfect remission and forgiveness." Does this prayer look like baptismal forgiveness? Does baptism then create in us new hearts? The prayer which is the voice of the Church, teaches us it does not, and that our baptismal pardon, unaccompanied by saving faith, is as destitute of sense as the empty jargon is of melodious sounds. The substance of the whole matter is this, that baptism is a very important ordinance—that it is the door of entrance into the visible Church—that it is the seal of our pardon and adoption into God's family, that by virtue of it we are entitled to christian privileges—that it is a standing evidence of the visibility of the Church, and that therefore it is generally necessary to salvation, but that after all it is only as the shadow and that we shall be awfully disappointed of heaven if we die without the substance. We are represented as the elected and predestinated of God by virtue of our baptism and yet we are taught to make this calling and election sure by repentance and faith, by personal holiness and obedience.

Having thus considered the nature and design of Christian Baptism, allow me to consider

II. *The proper subjects of this ordinance.*

And from facts which I have already introduced, you must be prepared for the assertion, that young children are the

true and proper subjects of this holy sacrament. Indeed, this would appear evident, if even the New Testament were silent upon the subject; for, unless by positive command requiring us to lay aside our children, the mere silence of the New Testament, with regard to them, if any such silence existed, would only leave the children where they were found; and as they were found by the apostles in the bosom of God's church, so they were left there, unless arranged otherwise by Divine authority.

That the children of christian parents are entitled to the ordinance of baptism, is evident from the fact, that the covenant which God made with *Abraham, embraced infant children as well as believing parents; and that it is the same now as when given to him. This covenant was made about thirty years before the birth of Isaac, as you may learn from the twelfth chapter of the book of Genesis; and it was established and ratified in the seventeenth—at which time circumcision, as its sign and seal, was instituted. Hence, Thus saith the Lord, †"This is my covenant which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee; every man child among you shall be circumcised." "And he that is eight days old, shall be circumcised among you." But I wish especially to direct your attention to the fact, that this covenant was never to terminate, and that it embraced the blessings of the gospel. In the seventh verse of the seventeenth chapter of the book of Genesis, God says to Abraham: "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, for an *everlasting* covenant." Now in this quotation the covenant is said to be an everlasting one; which I think is very positive testimony that God did not design it to be abrogated by the christian dispensation. Accordingly we find David referring to it, in such a manner as to show he was well acquainted with the perpe-

*Genesis 17. 7. †Genesis 17. 10, 12.

tuity of its character: * "Be ye always mindful of his covenant, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations, even the covenant that he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac, and hath confirmed the same to Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant." On this passage I need hardly say that David refers to the covenant of Abraham; and as in the book of Genesis this covenant is said to be everlasting, so David in this passage declares it to be spoken to a thousand generations; but as it was only forty and two generations from Abraham to Christ, we have very strong evidence for concluding that the law of the covenant was never to be repealed. Nor are we left merely to reason from the Old Testament scriptures upon this subject; for in the New Testament the covenant is regarded in the same light. Thus, in the third chapter of St. Paul's epistle to the Galatians, we read of the †blessing of Abraham coming on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ.—‡Of the promises being made to Abraham and his seed.—‖Of the impossibility of the covenant being repealed with the ceremonial law. §Of all baptised persons being Abraham's seed, and heirs according to promise: thus in the most unequivocal language giving testimony to the fact, that Abraham's covenant was not to be repealed, and that it embraced the blessings of the gospel.

This truth being ascertained, as it has been to a positive certainty, you will immediately see its bearing upon infant baptism; for if the covenant be the same now as when given to Abraham, it must embrace the same subjects, viz: believers, and their infant children; so that if I can but prove christian baptism to answer the same purpose as Jewish circumcision, and to be ordained in its place by the authority of Christ, I prove all that is necessary to be proved upon

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* I. Chron. 16. 15, 16. † Gal. 3. 14. ‡ Gal. 3. 16. ‖ Gal. 3. 17. § Gal. 3. 29.

this subject, and thereby sustain the doctrine of infant baptism. And here allow me to say, that as the infant child was entitled to the seal of the covenant in the old church, because God had *promised to be its God, so the infant child is entitled to the seal in the new church, and that for the same reason. I shall, therefore, with this understanding, proceed to prove christian baptism to be affixed to the covenant as its sign and seal, even as circumcision was affixed to it, in the former dispensation.

In the Gospel by St. Mark, our Lord declares,—† "He that believeth and is baptised, shall be saved." Now as *salvation* is the *covenant* that God made with Abraham, and our Lord affixed baptism to this covenant, is it not manifest that he regarded it as the token and seal of his covenant, and in the place of Jewish circumcision. Accordingly St. Peter instructs the Jews, saying—‡ "Repent and be baptised every one of you, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; for the *promise* is unto *you*, and to *your children*." Now what promise could Peter refer them to, but the well known words of the covenant—"I will be a God to *thee*, and thy *seed* after thee:" and why should he thus connect baptism with this covenant, if he designed not to teach them that baptism was in the place of circumcision and the seal of the covenant?

Nor is there any force in the evasion, that the apostle referred his hearers to the prophecy of Joel; for, could this be even proved, the conclusion would be the same—that prophecy being founded upon the covenant, and having direct reference to its blessings. In a passage which I have already quoted from St. Paul's epistle to the Galatians, he pronounces all baptized persons as Abraham's seed, and heirs according to promise. Now as it is an acknowledged fact, that of old none were considered as the children of

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* Gen. 17. 7. † Mark, 16. 16. ‡ Acts, 2. 38, 39.

Abraham but those that were circumcised: so the apostle would, (and that not obscurely,) present the truth, that baptism is now the seal of the covenant, causing its subjects to be Abraham's seed, and heirs according to promise.

But we have still more positive testimony that baptism was appointed by Christ in the place of circumcision. In the epistle to the Colossians they were plainly told, that baptism *was the "circumcision of Christ." "In whom also, (says he,) ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the *circumcision of Christ:* buried with him in *baptism.*" Now need I inform you that, according to this passage, the Colossian christians were regarded by St. Paul as being in a circumcised state—"In whom also *ye are circumcised*"—and should we inquire as to how they were circumcised, the apostle answers: "By the circumcision of Christ buried with him in baptism:" thus plainly intimating, that baptism was Christ's circumcision, and consequently the seal of the covenant. It is called Christ's circumcision, just as the first day of the week is called, by St. John, the *Lord's day,* because the Sabbath was changed to this day by Christ's appointment; or the Eucharistic supper is called the Lord's supper, because the Lord changed the ordinance of the passover to this sacrament: and in the same sense, we are to regard baptism as Christ's circumcision, because he appointed it in the place of circumcision, and as the token of his covenant.

If we adopt this interpretation of the passage, we may trace a fitness and accuracy of expression which can scarcely fail to assure us of its justice. Did Jewish circumcision represent the †operation of divine grace upon the heart? so does ‡christian baptism: Did Jewish circumcision initiate

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*Col. 2. 11, 12. †Dieut. 30. 6. Rom. 2. 28, 29. ‡Mat. 3. 11. Heb. 10. 22. Ezek. 36. 25.

its subjects into *the congregation of God's people? so does †christian baptism: Did Jewish circumcision entitle its subjects to be called ‡the children of God? so does ‖christian baptism: Was Jewish circumcision §affixed to the covenant by divine appointment? so is ¶christian baptism: and if thus answering every purpose of Jewish circumcision, there was an accuracy in the apostle's pronouncing it "the circumcision of Christ," which most certainly demands our special admiration.

The whole of this will appear still more consistent, when you clearly understand, that the Jewish and the Christian churches are one and the same body; and that Christ came not to destroy that church, which he had established in the days of Abraham and the prophets. In the eleventh chapter of St. Paul's epistle to the Romans, this truth is clearly presented. ○ In the seventeenth verse, the Jews are represented as branches which are broken from off their own olive tree, while the Gentile christians are introduced as being grafted in among them, and with them partaking of the root and fatness of the olive tree. In the nineteenth verse, the Jews are said to be the natural branches of this tree; while the Gentiles are introduced as being cut out of the wild olive tree, and grafted into the good olive tree—which, in the same verse, is said to be the Jews' own olive tree. Now these quotations being so positive, they require no explanations: I shall therefore remark, that as christians are said to be grafted into the Jewish church, it is overwhelmingly evident they must be grafted in, by some ordinance of divine appointment; and what ordinance can that be, but the circumcision of Christ, which St. Paul affirms to be baptism, and which, as I have already proved, is the door of entrance into the visible church.

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*Gen. 17. 14. †John, 3. 5. I. Cor. 12. 13. ‡Mat. 15. 26. Acts, 3. 25. ‖Gal. 3. 26, 27. §Gen. 17. 10, 11. ¶Mark, 16. 16. Acts, 2. 38. ○ Rom. 11. 17. Mat. 20. 16. I. Peter 2. 10. Eph. 2. 14. Hos. 2. 23.

Thus far I have considered the covenant as perpetual, embracing the children as well as the parents. I have also proved from the most unequivocal testimony, that christian baptism is the seal of this covenant; and that, as the covenant embraces little children, so its sign and seal must be administered to them. You will now permit me to prove, that young children are, by the inspired writers, acknowledged as members of the christian church.

In the thirtieth chapter of Jeremiah's prophecy, there is a remarkable allusion to our dispensation; and in connection with this allusion, we have the follwing testimony: * "Their children shall be as aforetime," saith the Lord.—Now then, granting the truth of this prophecy, it must be evident to all, that God did not design to repeal the law of bringing infants into his church; for you must all know, that the prophecy in question would be a notorious falsehood, if our children were not as aforetime.—Hence the passage, in the very clearest light, sustains the membership of our infant children, in our church and dispensation.

In the twenty-second chapter of Isaiah's prophecy, we have a similar prediction to that of Jeremiah. For thus saith the Lord, when speaking of the promised Messiah, † "And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house—the *offspring* and the *issue*. By his *father's house*, we are to understand the church: hence, says the apostle, "But Christ as a son *over his own house, whose house we are*." In the quotations from Isaiah, we have not only the testimony that the "*offspring* and the *issue*" were the glory of the Jewish church, but that they should hang upon Christ, in the christian church: and here I must confess, that the mind that will not be convinced of the membership of little children, from this testimony, is proof against every evidence which runs counter to its pre-conceived notions. But as it

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* Jer. 3. 20. †Is. 22. 24.

is unnecessary for me to multiply proofs upon this subject; I shall only refer you to one or two passages more, and then pass on to see their fulfillment. * "Behold I will lift up my hand to the Gentiles," saith the Lord. † "For they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their *offspring* with them." ‡ "I will pour my spirit upon thy *seed*, and my blessing upon thine *offspring*."

Now when we compare these predictions of the christain church, with the acknowledgment of the New Testament, we must be satisfied that Christ, in his gospel, does not alter the standing of our infants. Does the prediction say, "Their children shall be as aforetime?" Jesus acknowledges the truth of this prediction, when he says of the little children, ‖ "Of such is the kingdom of heaven;" and that this kingdom means the church, is evident from the following passage: § "Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." Now then, if little children are thus in the kingdom—if they are to be looked upon as models of imitation—if by becoming like little children, a person becomes a member in the kingdom, and the subject of baptism, surely those little ones, thus represented, are equally entitled to the ordinance. Does the prediction say, "They shall hang upon the Messiah all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the issue?" Jesus acknowledges the prediction when he says, ¶ "Whoso shall receive one such child in my name, receiveth me." Now I ask, how is Christ's church to receive the child, unless through baptism, which is the seal of the covenant, and the ordinance of initiation? In the language, then, of Christ, infant children are members of his church. ∘ In the language of St. Peter, they are still the subjects of Abraham's covenant; and in the language of St.

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* Is. 49. 22. † Is. 65. 23. ‡ Is. 44. 28. ‖ Mark, 10. 14. Luke, 18 15. § Mark, 10. 15, 16. ¶ Mat. 18. 5. ∘ Acts, 2. 39. Gal. 3. 14.

Paul, they are still included in the blessing of Abraham, and therefore they are the true subjects of baptism.

I shall now call your attention to the fact, that the practice of baptizing children was universal, without any exception, in the primitive age of the church, Justin Martyr, about forty years after the apostolic age, writes of all christians receiving spiritual circumcision. Again, he refers to several who, he says, were made disciples of Christ from their infancy,

Irenius, who was well acquainted with Polycarp, (St. John's disciple,) says, "Christ came to save all persons who by him are regenerated to God. Infants, little ones, youths, and elder persons." Again, he says, when Christ gave his apostles command of regenerating to God, he said: "Go teach all nations, baptising them:" thus plainly regarding baptism and regeneration as being synonymous.

Origen, who was born eighty-five years from the apostle's day, declares, that the church had a command from the apostles, to baptize infants.

Cyprian, and the Council of Carthage, A. D. 253, may next be introduced. The following question being proposed by Fidus, the Presbyter, was submitted to the Council, by Cyprian: "Can an infant be baptized before it is eight days old?" This Council, consisting of sixty-six Bishops, were unanimous in their decision; which Cyprian communicated to Fidus, in the following words:—

"As to the case of infants, of whom you said that they ought not to be baptized within the second and third day after their birth; and that the ancient law of circumcision should be so far repeated, that they ought not to be baptized until the eighth day; we were all of a different opinion: for, if even to the foulest offender, when he believes, remission of sins is granted, and none is prohibited from baptism, how much more should an infant be admitted, who, being just born, hath not sinned at all, except, being carnally born through Adam, he hath contracted the contagion of ancient

death. Our sentence, therefore, dearest brother, was, that none, by us, should be prohibited from baptism."

St. Ambrose says, that infant baptism was practiced in his time, and in the time of the apostles.

St. Hierome, about 280 years after the apostles, says: "If infants be not baptized, the sin of omitting their baptism is laid to the parents' charge." But, though I might multiply quotations to the same effect, I will only observe, at present, that the validity of infant baptism was not denied by any sect, until about A. D. 1103. It was first denied in France, by Peter de Bruis; but his sect very soon became extinct. It was next denied in Germany, A. D. 1522; but the whole current of scriptural, traditional, and historical evidence goes to show, that infant baptism was practised by Christ and his apostles.

Thus far considering the evidence in favor of infant baptism, I now proceed to reply to certain objections which, from time to time, have been brought forward against it.—And in the first place, it is stated that St. Paul, in his epistle to the Hebrews, gives evidence to prove that the covenant of Abraham was repealed by the ushering in of the gospel. Now what does St. Paul say upon the subject? He tells us of a **faulty* covenant; and of a new covenant being made with the house of Israel, instead of the faulty one.—But does he say that this covenant was the covenant which God made with Abraham? Most certainly not; for there is no reference to Abraham's covenant, in the passage. The covenant of Abraham was not *faulty*; for it embraced †Christ and the gospel. Abraham's covenant was said to be an ‡everlasting one, and therefore, was not to be repealed. Abraham's covenant, being spoken to a ‖thousand generations, must be considered as of perpetual duration. Abra-

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*Heb. 8. 7, 8. 9. †Gen. 12. 3. ‡Gen. 17. 7. ‖I. Chron. 16. 15, 16.

ham's covenant, being made * four hundred and thirty years before the ceremonial law, according to St Paul, could not be repealed with that law; and hence the irresistible conclusion that Abraham's covenant is not alluded to, in the passage. What covenant, then does the apostle refer to? I answer, the covenant of Horeb, which was made four hundred and thirty years after the covenant of Abraham: and this is positively expressed in St: Paul's quotations from Jeremiah's prophecy—"Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt." Accordingly, in Deuteronomy, Moses says: †"The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb; the Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day." Hence the irresistible conclusion, that Abraham's covenant is not repealed.

But again we are told that Abraham's covenant was a national compact, having respect to the possession of the lands of Canaan, and other temporal blessings; and that circumcision was nothing more than a token or badge of national descent, by which the posterity of Abraham should be kept pure from other nations, until the promised Messiah was born.

To this I reply, that the objection is far worse than absurd: it being in direct opposition to common sense, and the whole current of scripture. What greater blessing can man desire, or can God bestow, than the one embraced in the covenant—"I will be your God, and ye shall be my people:" and in accordance with this, Peter says to the inquiring Jews—"the promise is unto you and your children," viz: the promise of the covenant, in which God covenants to be a

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* Gal. 3. 17. † Duet. 5. 2, 3.

God to Abraham and his seed: and so, also, St. Paul informs us of Abraham's blessing coming on the Gentiles, through Jesus Christ; and of all baptized persons being Abraham's seed, and heirs according to promise. The only part of the objection, therefore, worthy our notice, is "that circumcision was a mere badge of national descent." This, however, is as directly opposed to scripture as the other; for Abraham's *servants received that seal, as well as his natural seed—† Ishmael as well as Isaac—Esau as well as Jacob. And the descendants of those men who were excluded from the promise, have retained the same rite even to the present day. Moreover, St. Paul declares, ‡ "that they are not all Israel, which are of Israel; neither because they are the children of Abraham, are they all children; but in Isaac shall thy seed be called: the children of the promise, are counted for the seed." Now if the covenant of Abraham were a mere national compact, and had respect solely to temporal blessings, there is not a word of truth in this declaration; for, on that ground, they were all Israel, who were of Israel; and the children of the flesh, whether believers or unbelievers, did inherit the promise. But when St. Paul tells us, that all believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, are the children of Abraham, he teaches us that Abraham's covenant was something more than a national compact; and that it had respect to something nobler than the lands of Canaan.

But it is said that, in the gospels, repentance and faith are regarded as the pre-requisites to baptism. Hence the argument drawn from our Lord's words—"He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved." "An infant cannot believe, and therefore it must not be baptized." But the argument proves too much; for it deprives the infant of *salvation*, as well as of baptism. "He that believeth not, shall be

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*Gen. 17. 12, 13. †Gen. 17. 2, 3. ‡Rom. 9. 6, 8.

damned;" an infant cannot believe, and therefore it must be damned. Now I appeal to your judgment, if the argument for the eternal condemnation of the infant, be not as strong as the one that excludes it from the privileges of christian baptism; and yet very few pretend but that it is possible for an infant to be saved. Indeed, every argument that would exclude the infant from baptism, would also exclude it from heaven; for if it be not the subject of baptism, it is not the subject of grace; and if not the subject of grace, not fit for the society of angels and saints.

But the passage in question does not say that faith, in the subject, is an essential pre-requisite to baptism; but only, that *both* are necessary to everlasting life. Hence, instead of the text being understood in any other sense, the inspired writers adduce frequent instances of baptism preceding repentance, faith, and the forgiveness of sins. Thus * John's baptism was only unto repentance. Peter informed the Jews, that christian baptism was for the † remission of sins; and ‡ Simon Magus, after he was baptized, was pronounced, by the apostle, to be in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity. It is stated, in the same chapter, that "the ‖ Holy Ghost was fallen on none of them; only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." It is true, that it is said of Simon, that "he believed also;" but as he was in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity, his faith could not be *justifying* faith. It is said of those that were baptized with him, that they believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God. And this was the nature of Simon's faith—a simple belief in the gospel, similar to the belief of those who inquired of Peter, saying—"What shall we do?" when he said to them, "Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins;" Thus plainly intimating, that they had not yet received the remission of sins; and yet they

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* Mat. 3. 11. † Acts, 2. 38. ‡ Acts, 8. 13, 23. ‖ Acts, 8. 16.

were the subjects of baptism. From all this it is evident, that our Lord did not intend that saving faith should at all times precede this ordinance; and hence little children may be baptized without it.

Again, it is objected against infant baptism, that if it take the place of circumcision, it is not valid unless administered on the eighth day. To this I reply: circumcision was valid, when administered *upon any day; and why not baptism?

It is further asserted, against baptism being in the place of circumcision, as the seal of the covenant, that the Holy Spirit is said to be this seal; and hence it is thought that baptism is excluded. And what, I ask, is baptism but the visible representation of the spirit's operation? for this operation of God's spirit upon the heart, is the thing signified by it: hence the meaning of the following passages: "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost"—"I will pour out my spirit"—"I will sprinkle clean water upon you"—"Then shall he sprinkle many nations"—"I will pour water upon him that is thirsty." So that if God's spirit be the seal of the covenant, as it certainly is, it must be regarded as its invisible seal, which all acknowledge to be represented by its outward and visible sign, baptism. Of this, however, I have already given you sufficient testimony.

But when all other objections fail, it is urged, that if baptism take the place of circumcision, we should not baptize females; for they were not circumcised. To this I reply; that, although females did not receive a mark of circumcision, under the former dispensation, yet thay were considered as being circumcised, on the ground of their standing in the male. It is well known, that no †uncircumcised person was permitted to eat of the passover; but females partook of it; and therefore females were regarded as being in a circumcised state. Besides, we have the example of

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*Ex. 4. 29. Josh. 5. 2. †Ex. 12. 48.

* Christ and his apostles, for baptizing females; and this we regard as sufficient.

Having thus sustained the doctrine of infant baptism, you will permit me to consider—

III. *The scriptural mode of administering it.*

The question to which I now wish to direct your attention, is—whether baptism by *sprinkling* or *pouring*, be regarded as scriptural, or as sufficiently emblematical to represent the operation of the Holy Spirit, which is the thing signified by this sacrament? And after careful examination of the subject, I have been led to the conclusion, that sprinkling or pouring is the only scriptural mode of administering the ordinance. This will appear evident, from a consideration of the relation that exists between the sign and the thing signified. Thus, John the Baptist, we are told, instead of applying the subjects to the water, applied the water to the subjects: † "I indeed," says he, "baptize you *with* water, but ye shall be baptized *with* the Holy Ghost." Again, ‡ "I indeed have baptized you *with* water, but he shall baptize you *with* the Holy Ghost." ‖ "John answered them, saying, I baptize with water." § "For John truly baptized *with* water; but ye shall be baptized *with* the Holy Ghost." Now from these, and many other passages, it is manifest, that baptism by water was administered in the same mode as the baptism of the spirit: and so we read they were baptized *with* the one, as well as with the other: thus, says Peter ¶ "And as I began to speak the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning: then remembered I the words of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized *with* water, but ye shall be baptized *with* the Holy Ghost." Now it is plain, that this baptism was by effusion; for it *fell on them*, and they were baptized *with*, and not *in* water. And it is worthy

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* Acts, 8. 12. Gal. 3. 28. † Mat. 3. 4. ‡ Mark, 1. 8. Luke, 3. 16. ‖ John, 1. 26. § Acts, 1. 5. ¶ Acts, 11. 15, 16.

of remark, that no other baptism but sprinkling or pouring can represent the pouring out, or falling down, of the spirit, or can agree with the sacred predictions of this baptism, which are found in the mysterious records of prophecy. Thus, Christ is said to *sprinkle many nations—† "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, saith the Lord"—‡ "For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty"—‖ "I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh;" and this pouring out, § Peter calls baptism. Hence St. Paul speaks of having the heart ¶ *sprinkled* from an evil conscience, and the body washed with pure water: thus evidently keeping up the connection between the sign and the thing signified.

Understanding the subject in this light, we have many difficulties explained, which would otherwise be inexplicable. It is very reasonable for us to suppose that John baptized the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and Judea, and all the region round about Jordon, *with*, and not *in* water. It is equally reasonable for us to suppose that the twelve apostles, on the day of pentecost, baptized the three thousand converts *with*, and not *in* water. It is also reasonable to suppose that the Philippian jailer, being baptized in the jail, and in the dark hour of the night, was baptized *with*, and not *in* water; as we have no account of a river running through the prison, in which he might be baptized: so that reason and revelation testify to the fact, that sprinkling or pouring was the original mode of administering this sacrament.

Yet, notwithstanding this evidence, it is contended by a certain sect, that baptism by immersion is the only true baptism: hence they say, that in the commission of my text, Jesus fixes the mode—the word "*baptizo*" itself signifying nothing but immersion; and that, therefore, baptism by sprinkling or pouring is to be rejected. Now you must im-

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* Is. 52. 15. † Ezek. 36. 25. ‡ Is. 44. 3. ‖ Joel, 2. 28. § Acts, 2. 3, to 14. ¶ Heb. 10. 22.

mediately perceive that if this be true, the baptism of the spirit is, as a consequence, to be rejected; for this baptism was by effusion—the baptisms of John were illegal, for they were performed *with* water—the baptism of the Phillippian jailer was not gospel baptism, from the fact that it was performed in the jail; which circumstance excludes the idea of immersion altogether.

But that our Lord did not institute immersion as essential, in the administration of this sacrament, is made incontrovertible, from the very nature of the commission itself.—All nations were to be made disciples by baptism, according to the instructions of our Lord; but if by baptism we are to understand immersion, the institution was unreasonable, as there were many portions of the earth in which, from the very nature of their situation, baptism by immersion would be an absolute impossibility. For instance, it would be impossible for baptism by immersion, to be practised in those northern regions, where, during the greater part of the year, the rivers and ponds are frozen to their very bottom: and it would seem the Baptists understand this difficulty; for, notwithstanding their professed zeal for the conversion of the world, I have never heard of their Missionaries approaching the frigid zone. As, then, the commandments and ordinances of God are reasonable, we very fairly conclude, that Christ did not fix upon immersion as essential to the true administration of this sacrament.

We are, however, told that the verb itself signifies nothing but immersion; and that, therefore, when our Lord gave his disciples instruction to baptize, they could only understand him as giving them information to plunge the subjects in the water. To this I reply: the word baptize was not so understood by the Evangelists, when they recorded the baptisms of John, and of the Holy Ghost; for, according to their testimony, the sign and the thing signified were both applied to the subject—John baptized "*with water*," and Jesus baptized with "*the Holy Ghost*."

But from the fact that the spirit is present in every place, it is contended that his baptism was by immersion. In answer to this, allow me to say, that, according to this sense of the spirit's baptism, the veriest infidel in existence is no less the subject of this spiritual immersion than the faithful and devoted soul; nay, even the very *Devils themselves are, in this general sense, immersed in the Divine Being; for he fills heaven, and earth, and hell. But when God condescends to inform us as to the mode of his spirit's operation upon his people, he always does it in such language as to exclue the idea of immersion: thus, †"He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass, and showers that water the earth." And in accordance with this ascertained fact, the Evangelist recites the narrative: ‡"While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on them which heard the word; and they of the circumcision which believed, were astonished; because that on the Gentiles also was *poured* out the gift of the Holy Ghost." Now just remember that Jesus, when he promised this descent of the Spirit, called it the *baptism* of the Holy Ghost, and you will be the better prepared to think correctly upon the assertion of the Baptist, that the verb *baptize* signifies nothing but immersion. You will find, in St. Paul's epistle to the Corinthians, another recorded instance of baptism, in which, from the very nature of the circumstance, baptism by immersion is rendered an impossibility. The passage reads thus: ‖"And were all baptised unto Moses, in the cloud and in the sea." Now, as in the Book of Exodus we read. that the children of Israel passed through on §dry ground, we cannot suppose that they were immersed in the sea; for being immersed in the water, and yet passing through on dry ground, are not very intelligent expressions.

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*Ps. 139. 8. †Ps. 72. 6. ‡Acts, 10. 44, 45. ‖1 Cor. 10. 2. §Ex. 14. 22.

I am aware the Baptists, in order to get rid of this difficulty, have spread the cloud upon the surface of the sea, thereby making it a complete canopy over their heads; and I am free to admit, that, as the pillar of cloud went before them, and stood behind them, it might, in the transition, have passed over their heads; but this change took place before they entered the sea. But even admitting that this was the case, it must be a very strange kind of baptism, in which not a particle of the element is permitted to touch the body: for you must immediately perceive, if the cloud was over their heads, as the immersionists say it was, they were not baptised in the cloud; as, in order to baptism, there must be an application of the element. But how, then, you ask, were the Israelites baptised in the cloud and in the sea? I answer, they were sprinkled by the spray of the sea, and by a shower of rain from the clouds. Nor upon this subject are we left to mere conjecture: for we have a "Thus saith the Lord," to sustain our position. *"Thou hast with thine own arm redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. The clouds poured out rain." Hence we conclude, the Israelites were sprinkled, in a shower, and not immersed in a vacuum. The true meaning of the Greek word †*baptizo*, from *bapto*, to dip, is to wash, to stain, to dye, to plunge, to sprinkle, to immerse: so that we must examine the Scriptures, in order to know the exact mode practiced by Christ and his apostles.

But when the argument drawn from the meaning of the verb *baptizo*, fails the immersionists, they have recourse to the recorded instances of baptism. Hence say they, "John baptised in Jordon—Christ came up out of the water—Philip and the Eunuch went, both of them, down into the water—John baptised in Enon, because there was much water there—and believers are said to be buried with Christ

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* Ps. 77. 15, 17. † Wright's Lexicon.

by baptism." Now as these circumstances are continually referred to by the immersionists, it may be important to examine each particular, so that you may be prepared to judge of the weight of evidence in favor of their system.

And in the first place, it is said of John, that he baptised *in* Jordan; and, therefore, say the Baptists, he must have immersed in the river. To this I reply: Every person acquainted with the Greek Testament, knows very well, that the preposition *en*, which in this case is translated *in*, is often rendered *with* or *by*. It is rendered *with*, about one hundred and fifty times in the New Testament, and may be so rendered in this case. Besides, thousands have *even* been *in* the water, who never have been immersed all over, in their lives. Hence the statement that John baptised *en* Jordan, only implies that he used the waters of Jordan in administering the ordinance. It is very likely that, as John baptised in * Bethabara beyond Jordan, that the water was brought to him in a bowl or basin, from the river; which circumstance would authorise the Evangelist to say, that John baptised *en* (*with*) Jordan.

The next thing to be considered, is, that Christ, after his baptism, came up out of the water; and, therefore, say the Baptists, he must have been immersed in the water.— But it is only begging the question to say that such language proves immersion; for hundreds have come up out of the water who were not immersed in the water. The Greek word translated *out of*, is *apo*, and its true equivalent in English, is *from*: Thus, † "Who hath warned you to flee *apo* (*from*) the wrath to come?" ‡ "The vail of the temple, we are told, was rent in twain, *apo* the top to the bottom:" So that we are only taught in the passage, that Jesus came *from* the water.

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* John 1. 28. John 3. 26. John 1. 33, 34. † Mat. 3. 7.
‡ Mat. 27. 51.

But in the next place, the subjects are said to go *into* the water. This, however, does not prove immersion; for what is said of the subject, is also said of the administrator. They both went down *into* the water, both Philip and the Eunuch; and if it were possible for Philip to go into the water, and yet not be immersed in it, so also it was equally possible for the Eunuch. Besides, travellers inform us, that in this region there is no stream of water "*more than ancle deep.*" But the preposition *eis*, which is rendered *into*, is frequently rendered *to* or *unto:* thus, Christ is said to go *into* a mountain to pray. In reply to this, a Baptist writer remarks—"I suppose there was a cave there." But was it in one of these caves that the devil shewed him all the kingdoms of the world? for we are expressly informed, that for this purpose "he took him up *into* an exceeding high mountain." The same preposition is rendered *to*, when our Lord commanded Peter * to go *to* the sea and catch a fish: the words are, *eis teen thalassan.* Now whether did the Saviour mean that Peter should dive under the water and catch the fish in his hands, or that he should merely go *to* the water's *edge*, and cast in his hook? I leave this question with yourselves to answer.

The next circumstance to be considered, is, that John baptised in Enon, because there was much water there.—But instead of this fact proving the doctrine of immersion, it is decidedly unfriendly to it; for respectable travellers inform us, that in the whole of Enon there is neither creek, river, brook, nor pond, of sufficient depth for the plunging of a person; and one very intelligent Missionary, after visiting the place, makes the following remark: "In Enon there are a multitude of draw wells;" but he denies there being in it a place sufficient for immersion.

The only remaining evidence of the Baptists, in favor

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* Mat. 17. 27.

of immersion, is founded upon the expression, that Christians are said to be buried with Christ by baptism. This phraseology is used by * St. Paul, in two of his epistles, and in both cases for the same purpose, viz: as an argument to induce Christians to live a life of holiness. There is no allusion whatever to the *mode* of baptism, in the passage, as is evident from the connection: but to that of which baptism is a sign, viz: *death to sin.* But according to the Baptist interpretation of the passage, it is a sign of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection: whereas, no such thing is even intimated, by the apostle. On the contrary, he plainly asserts, that baptism is simply a sign of *Christ's death.*—"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ, were baptised into his death." Here the act of baptism terminates, because it simply signifies "*death to sin,*" while the "resurrection to newness of life," is to follow, as a consequence of this death. This is plainly expressed in the sixth verse—"Knowing that our old man is crucified with him, *that the body of sin* might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Here the same body which is buried by baptism, is said to be crucified, to prepare the way for a life of holiness. Hence the plain meaning of the apostle is this, as if he had said, "You profess to be dead to sin—this was evidently implied in your baptism; for as Christ was put to death for sin, so in the reception of that Christian rite, you profess to be dead to sin: we are, therefore, buried with him by baptism, that is, *our body of sin,* (as he expresses it,) is now buried with him by virtue of that profession which we made in baptism." There is, therefore, in the passage, no allusion to the *mode* of baptism; for baptism is made a sign of his death, and the burial is introduced as a necessary consequence.

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* Rom. 6. 4. Col. 2. 12.

Thus, my brethren, I have endeavored to lay this subject before you, in as clear a manner as possible. It is now your duty to value the ordinance by which God recognizes your children. Think not it is left with you to determine whether or not you shall have your offspring consecrated in baptism; for if God has instituted this sacrament for their benefit, and you be found to reject the ordinance of his appointment, it is fearfully to be expected that God will look upon you as the despisers of his covenant. How many professed Christian parents most shamefully neglect the baptism of their children? How many seem to look upon the ordinance as if it were entirely useless, or as if it were an unnecessary burden, rather than a christian duty? How many there are in this age of impiety, who, without any respect for the ordinance of God, just name their children as they do their domestic animals, and thereby place them as strangers to the covenant of promise? My brethren, God will surely visit you for these things.

To reject baptism, is to reject the very foundation of our beloved Christianity. Is it not a fact too notorious to be denied, that the * repudiators of infant baptism are necessarily compelled to deny the covenant of which baptism is the seal, and which as you have already seen, embraces Christ and the gospel? Hence you need not be surprised at the assertion, that to reject infant baptism, is to reject the very foundation of our holy religion; because it is not only a rejection of the covenant which embraces Christ and the gospel, but it is also a rejection of the well known words of our Lord—"Suffer little children to come to me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of Heaven;" and "whoso receiveth one such child in my name, receiveth me." Say not in your hearts, what good can a few drops of water do upon the face of the child; for this is nothing else

* Gill on the Covenant, and Hosken on Baptism.

than sceptically to question the propriety of the divine institution. The Israelites might have thus reasoned, when they were commanded to look upon the brazen serpent in the wilderness; and Moses might have questioned the utility of smiting the Red Sea with his rod; but it was no more their business to question the propriety of obeying these commands of God, than it is ours to question the propriety of baptizing our children. The grand question which must determine our duty, in believing and practising infant baptism, is this: Do the inspired writers acknowledge it to be a divine institution? or, is it an ordinance of God's appointment? Ponder, I beseech you, the evidences I have introduced; and if, after surveying the whole ground, you still feel doubts concerning the truth of any leading sentiment in favour of the doctrine, propose to yourselves this question, and see that you answer it to your own satisfaction: By what method are the arguments in favor of infant baptism, and that by sprinkling or pouring, to be set aside? or how are they to be explained away, on the supposition that they are really on the side of error?

But the inquiry—What good can the baptism of little children do? which is so often sounded in our ears, can, after all, be intelligently answered. By it our children are * grafted into the church of God: by it they are recognized as the † children of God; by it they are secured the blessings of the ‡ christian covenant: by it they receive their ‖ name, which continually reminds them of their covenant vows. In a word, it secures to them every blessing for time and eternity; and, therefore, it is of infinite importance, as a means of grace, and an ordinance of God. We need not be informed, that God can bestow blesings without baptism. We have nothing to do with what God *may* do. His spirit

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* Rom. 6. 3. † Gal. 3. 26, 27. ‡ Mark, 16. 16. Titus, 3. 5, 6. ‖ Acts, 15. 17. II. Chron. 7. 14. Amos, 9. 12. Luke, 2. 21.

is said to * accompany the water, and it is, therefore, our duty to prize the ordinance, because it is of his appointment.

My brethren, let us praise God that he is our God, and the God of our children—that while he graciously accepts us he kindly accepts our children also. May we never be seperated from those we love; but finally, as we meet with the approving plaudit, "Well done, good and faithful servant"—as we begin the loud Hallelujah of triumph in Heaven, and know that we are freed from sin, and sorrow, and temptation, may our loud anthems of triumph be heightened by the presence of the children whom God hath given us; and may we there, in ecstacies of rapture, hear them give glory to God, that they had received the seal of that covenant in which they were included. And now to the *God of Abraham,* to *our God,* and the *God of our children,* be ascribed everlasting praises, both now and evermore. AMEN and AMEN.

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* John, 3. 5. Acts, 2. 38, 39.